

**Amendments to the Claims**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

Claims 1-17 (canceled)

18. (Currently amended) A composition comprising as an active ingredient retinoic acid nanoparticles comprising micelles of retinoic acid coated with an inorganic salt of polyvalent metal and having an average particle size of 5 to ~~[[300]]~~ 106.4 nm.

19. (Original) The composition according to claim 18, wherein the polyvalent metal inorganic salt is calcium carbonate, zinc carbonate, or calcium phosphate.

20. (Currently amended) The composition according to claim 18 or 19, wherein the retinoic acid nanoparticles are obtained by:  
dispersing retinoic acid dissolved in a lower alcohol in an aqueous alkali solution;  
adding a nonionic surfactant to the dispersion to form a mixed micelle;  
adding to the micelle a halide or acetate of divalent metal along with a carbonate or phosphate of alkali metal so that a molar ratio of the former to the latter is 1:0 to 1:1.0, thereby depositing a coating of the inorganic salt of the polyvalent metal on a surface of the micelle; and  
adjusting an average particle size of the resulting nanoparticles to 5 to ~~[[300]]~~ 106.4 nm.

21. (Currently amended) The composition according to claim 18, wherein the active ingredient is retinoic acid nanoparticles having an average particle size of 5 to ~~[[300]]~~ 106.4 nm and coated with calcium carbonate.

22. (Withdrawn) The composition according to claim 18, wherein the active ingredient is retinoic acid nanoparticles having an average particle size of 5 to 300 nm and coated with zinc carbonate.

23. (Withdrawn) The composition according to claim 18, wherein the active ingredient is retinoic acid nanoparticles having an average particle size of 5 to 300 nm and coated with calcium phosphate.

24. (Original) The composition according to claims 18 or 19 for use as an oral preparation, a non-oral preparation, an external preparation, or a cosmetic.

25. (Original) The composition according to claim 24 being a sustained-release composition.

26. (Currently amended) A sustained-release preparation containing as an active ingredient retinoic acid nanoparticles having an average particle size of 5 to [[300]] 106.4 nm and coated with calcium carbonate.

27. (Currently amended) An external preparation containing as an active ingredient retinoic acid nanoparticles having an average particle size of 5 to [[300]] 106.4 nm and coated with calcium carbonate.

28. (Currently amended) A cosmetic containing retinoic acid nanoparticles having an average particle size of 5 to [[300]] 106.4 nm and coated with calcium carbonate.

29. (Withdrawn) A sustained-release preparation containing as an active ingredient retinoic acid nanoparticles having an average particle size of 5 to 300 nm and coated with zinc carbonate.

30. (Withdrawn) An external preparation containing as an active ingredient retinoic acid nanoparticles having an average particle size of 5 to 300 nm and coated with zinc carbonate.

31. (Withdrawn) A cosmetic containing retinoic acid nanoparticles having an average particle size of 5 to 300 nm and coated with zinc carbonate.

32. (Withdrawn) A sustained-release preparation containing as an active ingredient retinoic acid nanoparticles having an average particle size of 5 to 300 nm and coated with calcium phosphate.

33. (Withdrawn) An external preparation containing as an active ingredient retinoic acid nanoparticles having an average particle size of 5 to 300 nm and coated with calcium phosphate.

34. (Withdrawn) A cosmetic containing retinoic acid nanoparticles having an average particle size of 5 to 300 nm and coated with calcium phosphate.